

Amendment to the Claims

The following listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

Claim 1 (currently amended). An e-mail system for use by a plurality of passengers passenger in a vehicle, said each passenger having access to a terminal, the e-mail system comprising:

a first server located on said vehicle, wherein said first server is configured to transport e-mail between said first server and said terminal;
a second server external to said vehicle, wherein said second server is configured to transport e-mail between said second server and a data network; and
a communications system configured to operate ~~in~~ across a plurality of wireless ~~modes~~ connections to thereby wirelessly transfer e-mail between said first server and said second server while the vehicle is in motion, wherein the plurality of wireless ~~modes~~ connections comprises an ~~immediate mode~~ and a batch mode a satellite connection and a radio-based connection each having at least one of a plurality of transfer modes for transferring email between the first server and the second server, and wherein the wireless ~~mode~~ communications system is further configured to combine e-mail from the plurality of passengers into a storage queue and to transfer e-mail in the storage queue to transfer email between the first server and the second server while the vehicle is in motion using one of the plurality of transfer modes that is selected by the communications system to minimize the overall cost of operating the e-mail system.

Claim 2 (currently amended). The e-mail system of claim 1 wherein: said communications system is configured to deliver an e-mail offer to said terminal; and said communications system is configured to selectively transfer e-mail messages to said first server based upon requests from one of said passenger passengers in response to said e-mail offer.

Claim 3 (original). The e-mail system of claim 2 wherein said e-mail offer comprises a subject header identifying an e-mail available for upload, an indication of who sent said e-mail, and a price for delivering said e-mail to said terminal.

Claim 4 (original). The e-mail system of claim 1 wherein: said terminal is a laptop computer configured with information identifying a home e-mail server; said communications system is further configured to route e-mail to and from said laptop computer through said first server regardless of said laptop computer configuration; and said first server emulates said home e-mail server.

Claim 5 (original). The e-mail system of claim 4 wherein said second server is configured to periodically poll said home e-mail server for inbox messages.

Claim 6 (original). The e-mail system of claim 4 wherein said second server is configured to receive e-mail forwarded from said home e-mail server.

Claim 7 (original). The e-mail system of claim 4 wherein: said communications system is configured to deliver an e-mail offer to said terminal; and said communications system is configured to selectively transfer e-mail messages to said first server based upon requests from said passenger in response to said e-mail offer.

Claims 8-9 (cancelled).

Claim 10 (currently amended). The e-mail system of claim 1 wherein:
said communications system is further configured to select one of ~~said~~ a plurality
of wireless communication modes based on mode selection criteria.

Claim 11 (previously presented). The e-mail system of claim 10 wherein said mode selection criteria comprises an increase in data throughput.

Claim 12 (original). The e-mail system of claim 10 wherein said mode selection criteria comprises an urgency of transferring an e-mail message.

Claim 13 (original). The e-mail system of claim 10 wherein said mode selection criteria comprises a transmission cost associated with said wireless communication mode.

Claim 14 (original). The e-mail system of claim 10 wherein said mode selection criteria comprises an amount a user is willing to pay.

Claim 15 (original). The e-mail system of claim 10 wherein said mode selection criteria comprises a time since a last transfer of data.

Claim 16 (previously presented). The e-mail system of claim 10 further configured to place e-mail data in a queue to be sent and received in batches when operating in the batch mode.

Claim 17 (original). The e-mail system of claim 16 wherein said mode selection criteria comprises the current amount of data accumulated in the queue.

Claims 18-20 (cancelled).

Claim 21 (previously presented). The e-mail system of claim 10 wherein said communication system is configured to transfer compressed data.

Claim 22 (previously presented). The e-mail system of claim 10 wherein said communication system is configured to transfer encrypted data.

Claim 23 (original). The e-mail system of claim 1 further comprising a vehicle data network configured to transport an e-mail message between said terminal and said first server.

Claim 24 (original). The e-mail system of claim 23 where in said vehicle data network comprises a world wide web server.

Claim 25 (original). The e-mail system of claim 23 where in said vehicle data network comprises an e-mail server emulating an e-mail server identified by said passenger.

Claim 26 (original). The e-mail system of claim 1 wherein said terminal communicates with said first server via a modem interface unit.

Claim 27 (original). The e-mail system of claim 1 wherein said terminal communicates with said first server via an in-flight entertainment system.

Claim 28 (original). The e-mail system of claim 1 wherein said terminal communicates with said first server via a wireless interface unit.

Claim 29 (original). The e-mail system of claim 2 wherein said terminal comprises a kiosk.

Claim 30 (original). The e-mail system of claim 2 wherein said terminal comprises a laptop computer.

Claim 31 (original). The e-mail system of claim 2 wherein said terminal comprises a keyboard.

Claim 32 (currently amended). The e-mail system of claim 2 wherein said terminal comprises a ~~palm-pilot~~ personal digital assistant.

Claim 33 (original). The e-mail system of claim 2 wherein said second server is further configured to provide e-mail accounts for said users.

Claim 34 (original). The e-mail system of claim 2 wherein said vehicle is an airplane.

Claim 35 (currently amended). A method of transporting a plurality of e-mail messages between a data network and a terminal on a vehicle, the method comprising the steps of:

receiving one of the plurality of messages ~~a message~~ from a terminal on said vehicle at a first server on said vehicle;

determining a priority of the one of the plurality of messages;

selecting a wireless transmission mode for the one of the plurality of messages,

wherein the wireless transmission mode is an immediate mode if the

message is an urgent message, and otherwise placing the message into a

storage queue and selecting one of a plurality of communications modes a

wireless transmission mode for the message in a manner that minimizes

the overall cost of transporting the e-mail messages stored in the storage

queue, wherein the plurality of communications modes comprises a batch

mode and an immediate mode, and wherein the intermediate mode is

selected if the message is an urgent message;

establishing a data connection between said first server and a second server

according to the selected transmission mode while the vehicle is in

motion, wherein said second server is located on said data network and

external to said vehicle; and

transporting e-mail between said first server and said second server via a wireless

connection using the selected one of the plurality of communications

modes the data connection using the selected transmission mode.

Claims 36-38 (cancelled).

Claim 39 (previously presented). The method of claim 35 wherein said selecting step further comprises determining the selected one of the plurality of communications modes based upon mode selection criteria.

Claim 40 (original). The method of claim 39 wherein said selection mode criteria comprises reducing cost and increasing data throughput.

Claim 41 (original). The method of claim 39 wherein said selection criteria is an urgency of the message.

Claim 42 (original). The method of claim 39 wherein said selection criteria is an amount of data accumulated in the queue.

Claim 43 (original). The method of claim 39 wherein said selection criteria is a cost of said wireless communication mode.

Claim 44 (original). The method of claim 39 wherein said selection criteria is an amount said user is willing to pay.

Claim 45 (original). The method of claim 39 wherein said selection criteria is a time since last communication.

Claim 46 (original). The method of claim 39 wherein said establishing step further comprises the step of determining when to initiate said communication mode.

Claim 47 (cancelled).

Claim 48 (previously presented). The method of claim 35 wherein said step of transporting e-mail between said second server and a data network further comprises an e-mail retrieval step wherein an e-mail message is transmitted to said second server.

Claim 49 (original). The method of claim 48 wherein said e-mail retrieval step further comprises the step of polling a home e-mail server by said second server and retrieving said e-mail message from said home e-mail service.

Claim 50 (original). The method of claim 48 wherein said e-mail retrieval step further comprises said second server receiving e-mail forwarded from a home e-mail server.

Claim 51 (original). The method of claim 48 further comprising the step of establishing an e-mail account for said user.

Claim 52 (original). The method of claim 51 further comprising the step of receiving an e-mail message sent to said e-mail account.

Claim 53 (original). The method of claim 48 wherein said step of transporting e-mail between said second server and said first server further comprises: the step of providing an e-mail offer to said terminal; the step of receiving a request to upload a selected e-mail message; and the step of providing said requested e-mail message to said terminal.

Claim 54 (original). The method of claim 53 wherein said step of providing said e-mail offer further comprises the step of providing a subject header identifying an e-mail available for upload, an indication of who sent said e-mail, and a price for delivering said e-mail to said terminal.

Claim 55-57 (cancelled).

Claim 58 (previously presented). The method of claim 39 wherein said message is compressed.

Claim 59 (previously presented). The method of claim 39 wherein said message is encrypted.

Claim 60 (original). The method of claim 35 further comprising the steps of:
said first server receiving information identifying a home e-mail server from said terminal, wherein said terminal is a laptop computer;
directing said laptop to said first server regardless of said identifying information;
and
said first server emulating said home e-mail server.

Claim 61 (original). The method of claim 35 wherein said step of transporting a message between said terminal and said first server further comprises transporting said message via a vehicle data network comprising a world wide web server.

Claim 62 (original). The method of claim 35 wherein said step of transporting a message between said terminal and said first server further comprises transporting said message via a vehicle data network comprising an e-mail server emulating an e-mail server identified by said terminal.

Claim 63 (original). The method of claim 35 further comprising the step of communicating between said terminal and said first server via at least one of the following: a modem interface unit, an in-flight entertainment system, a wireless interface unit; and a kiosk.

Claim 64 (original). A digital storage medium having computer-executable instructions stored thereon, wherein said computer-executable instructions are operable to execute the method of claim 39.

Claim 65 (original). A digital storage medium having computer-executable instructions stored thereon, wherein said computer-executable instructions are operable to execute the method of claim 53.

Claim 66 (previously presented). A digital storage medium having computer-executable instructions stored thereon, wherein said computer-executable instructions are operable to execute the method of claim 35.

Claims 67-68 (cancelled).

Claim 69 (new). A method of minimizing the overall cost of transferring a plurality of email messages between an airborne server and a terrestrial server, the method comprising the steps of:

combining at least a portion of the plurality of messages from a plurality of customers into a storage queue;
selecting one of the plurality of operating modes for transferring the portion of the plurality of messages in the storage queue in a manner that minimizes the overall cost of transferring the messages in the storage queue, wherein the plurality of operating modes comprise a satellite transfer mode and a radio-based transfer mode; and
transferring the messages in the queue using the selected one of the plurality of operating modes while the airborne server is airborne.

Claim 70 (new). The method of claim 69 further comprising the step of charging a fee to the user for transferring the email message, wherein the fee for using the immediate mode is greater than the fee for using the batch mode.

Claim 71 (new). The method of claim 69 wherein the selecting step further comprises considering user criteria in selecting the one of the plurality of operating modes.

Claim 72 (new). The method of claim 71 wherein the user criteria comprises a message priority.

Claim 73 (new). The method of claim 71 wherein the user criteria comprises a cost of sending the message.